



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION FUND

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Michigan Department of Agriculture is offering a grant opportunity that will promote and enhance Michigan's \$61-billion agriculture industry. Proposals for the competitive grant program, "**Agricultural Innovation Fund**" (also known as the "Julian-Stille Value-Added Agricultural Development Fund"), will be accepted now through July 13, 2006. The Michigan Department of Agriculture will host several grant writing workshops across the state of Michigan in the months of May and June, 2006 to assist potential applicants in developing sound proposals.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Eligible applicants include: individuals, farmer-owned cooperatives, partnerships, limited liability companies, private or public corporations, and local units of government.
- Applicants must provide ten (10) percent in matching funds.
- The Michigan Department of Agriculture will accept proposals intended to establish, retain, expand, attract, and/or develop value-added agricultural processing and related agricultural production operations in Michigan.

PROGRAM GOALS/OBJECTIVES

The program will benefit processors, agri-businesses, producers, legislatively authorized commodity organizations and local units of government in Michigan by:

- Helping processors, agri-businesses, producers, local units of government and legislatively-authorized commodity boards to establish, retain, expand, attract or develop value-added processing and production operations in Michigan;
- Assisting new value-added agriculture ventures providing additional economic benefit to producers in Michigan;
- Supporting agricultural economic development that will provide economic and social benefits to local communities in Michigan.

For additional information, contact: Michael DiBernardo at (517) 373-9144, or Michigan Department of Agriculture at (800) 292-3939.



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GRANT PROCESS / REVIEW OF PROPOSALS

APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants for the Agricultural Innovation Fund include individuals, farmer-owned cooperatives, partnerships, limited liability companies, private or public corporations, and local units of government for projects designed to establish, retain, expand, attract, or develop value-added agricultural processing and related agricultural production operations in this state.

GRANT CATEGORIES

Categories available for Agricultural Innovation Fund grants are as follows:

Technical Assistance: Innovative technology or technical assistance, including feasibility studies that will enhance and support the commercialization of value-added products.

Facility Improvements: Upgrading, enhancements and acquisitions to buildings, equipment, utility modifications and improvements, transportation improvements, telecommunications infrastructure, or other infrastructure improvements.

Market Research: Market research and/or market development project for a product(s) and/or service(s) prepared by and industry consultant.

Business Plan: Detailed business plan development that incorporates a specific marketing strategy and specifically outlines the working capital and financial needs, management structure, construction, production, marketing, and distribution needs.

Facility/Land: Facility purchase and/or construction, including property, and/or land acquisition and assembly, demolition, and site development.

PROPOSAL CRITERIA

Agricultural Innovation Fund grant proposals must contain the following:

- A cover page, which includes company name, grant category, contact person, address, phone number, FAX number, and e-mail address;
- Background information, including identification of the project management team and its qualifications;

(Proposal Criteria continued)

- Goals and objectives of the project, including letter(s) of support from the community in which the proposed project will be conducted;
- A work plan describing what will be done to accomplish the goals and objectives of the project;
- Expected outcome(s), which can be direct or indirect measures of program objectives. Each program will have unique needs and outcomes. It is important that each outcome provides evidence about the accomplishment of a particular program objective. These outcomes are program-focused, measurable, specific and clear. A program may be any activity, project, function or policy that has an identifiable purpose or set of objectives;
- Budget information (since this is a cost reimbursement program requiring a minimum 10 percent cash match); and
- Deliverables, which are program tasks and/or activities that are measured in terms of the volume of work accomplished. For example, the number of training sessions held, seminars conducted, education materials distributed and other specific program tasks. These tasks and/or activities have little inherent value in themselves, but are important because they are intended to lead to desired outcome.

SCORING SYSTEM

Agricultural Innovation Fund grant proposals will be evaluated, scored and ranked according to how well each proposal demonstrates the following:

- Economic impact on the community;
- Economic impact or enhancement to an agricultural product and or service;
- Amount of project innovation and or initiative;
- Clear project proposal with specific and measurable outcomes; and
- Management team experience and expertise.

SUBMISSION CRITERIA

- Proposals must be received (NOT postmarked) by **July 13, 2006, at 5:00 P.M.** and will not be accepted if received after the deadline.
- Proposals must be submitted in BOTH printed (hardcopy) and electronic form.

(Submission Criteria continued)

- The printed proposal should be submitted to:

Michigan Department of Agriculture
Agriculture Development Division
Julian-Stille Value-Added Agriculture Development Fund
P.O. Box 30017
Lansing, MI 48909

- The electronic version should be submitted in a Microsoft PC-compatible format (preferably pdf), either on compact disc mailed to the above street address, OR via email to DiBernardoM@michigan.gov.
- Faxed documents will NOT be accepted, as the review panel must be able to reproduce copies.
- Applications should be limited to ten - 8 ½ x 11" pages, with not less than 12-point font and 1-inch margins. Attachments do not count toward the page limit.
- Applications and attachments submitted for grant money under this act become a public record of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and, accordingly, may be subject to public disclosure under Public Act No. 442 of 1976, MCL 15.231, et seq. (Freedom of Information Act.)
- A maximum of 90 days after application deadline is allowed for the selection process to be completed.
- Any proposal that is not successful will be returned in its entirety.

NOTE: The Director of Michigan Department of Agriculture will have final authority to approve or not approve grant awards, based upon selection criteria, program priorities and application instructions.

ADDITIONAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Michigan Economic Development Corporation

<http://www.michigan.org/index.asp>

MSU Product Center for Agriculture and Natural Resources

<http://www.aec.msu.edu/product/index.htm>

USDA Rural Development

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mi/>

Michigan Department of Agriculture: (800) 292-3939

MDA-Agriculture Development Division: (517) 241-2178

Michael DiBernardo: (517) 373-3194

<http://www.michigan.gov/mda>



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SCORING SYSTEM

Applicant Name: _____

Application Number: _____ Total Score: _____

	SCORE
1. An application for a grant for business plan development shall be evaluated according to all of the following selection criteria:	
• Expected benefit to the Michigan agricultural and food industry and the local economic impact. A score of 0-20 points will be awarded based on perceived benefit.	
• Analysis of proposed project in terms of business and market planning. A score of 0-20 points will be awarded based on the perceived benefit of a business development plan.	
• Clear project proposal with specific, measurable outcomes. A score of 0-50 points will be awarded based on the clarity of the proposal.	
• A score of 0 -10 points will be awarded based on the level of matching funds. In-kind contributions shall not be counted as match.	
2. An application for a grant for market research or market development projects shall be evaluated according to all of the following selection criteria:	
• Expected benefit to the Michigan agricultural and food industry and the local economic impact. A score of 0-20 points will be awarded based on perceived benefit.	
• Analysis of proposed project in terms of business and market planning. A score of 0-20 points will be awarded based on the perceived benefit of market research or market development.	
• Clear project proposal with specific, measurable outcomes. A score of 0-50 points will be awarded based on the clarity of the proposal.	
• A score of 0-10 points will be awarded based on the level of matching funds. In-kind contributions shall not be counted as match.	

3. An application for a grant for technical assistance shall be evaluated according to all of the following selection criteria:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expected benefit to the Michigan agricultural and food industry and the local economic impact. A score of 0-20 points will be awarded based on perceived benefit. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A current business plan including the added benefit of the technical assistance. A score of 0-30 points will be awarded for the benefit of the technical assistance to the business plan. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear project proposal with specific, measurable outcomes. A score of 0-40 points will be awarded based on the clarity of the proposal. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A score of 0-10 points will be awarded based on the level of matching funds. In-kind contributions shall not be counted as match. 	
4. An application for a grant for upgrades and enhancements shall be evaluated according to all of the following selection criteria:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expected benefit to the Michigan agricultural and food industry and the local economic impact. A score of 0-20 points will be awarded based on perceived benefit. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A current business plan including the added benefit of the upgrades and enhancements. A score of 0-30 points will be awarded based on the business plan. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear project proposal with specific, measurable outcomes. A score of 0-40 points will be awarded based on the clarity of the proposal. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A score of 0-10 points will be awarded based on the level of matching funds. In-kind contributions shall not be counted as match. 	
5. An application for a grant for facility and/or land assistance shall be evaluated according to all of the following selection criteria:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expected benefit to the Michigan agricultural and food industry and the local economic impact. A score of 0-20 points will be awarded based on perceived benefit. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A current feasibility study and business plan. A score of 0-40 points will be awarded based on the feasibility study and business plan. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear project proposal with specific, measurable outcomes. A score of 0-30 points will be awarded based on the clarity of the proposal. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A score of 0-10 points will be awarded based on the level of matching funds. In-kind contributions shall not be counted as match. 	